

Frank B. Ford
GREENE STREET ARTISTS' BUILDING
5225 Greene Street
Philadelphia, PA 191442927
(215)8487385

The Hamburger

Diane is returning to the buzzing car when a trailer truck roars and shimmers. She halts because she can no longer hear her clogs on the gravel of the parking lot, then raises binoculars to see the driver hunched behind the sun-smeared glass...huge blue letters of the trailer shaking by.

"It's like a desert," she announces, squinting as the binoculars fall on their swinging strap when she whirls round to look through the windows of Harry's shop. Everything there seems jumping and coated with mercury, and Diane jams her eyes shut in order to think about her teacher.

What if he made that face if she said that things shook in the heat like things on a desert? Well then she would just tell him, once again, "I'm only in Seeing 'cause Yoga is closed!"

If he didn't like it, someone else could take *The Long World* and go around looking through binoculars at everything. Of course Diane couldn't drop out if Olla didn't. Olla had *The Short World* but didn't come. Diane and a few hippies met with Liege that first night to hear Liege discuss what seeing *wasn't*. He informed the class, too, that he had chosen his name just for this course, and that he used different names in everything he did. He asked Diane what she thought of this idea. Diane didn't think anything.

Now she decides to let Harry fix the buzzing of the car, and walks towards the shop again. There the open door frames a cold greenish light which floats like a balloon.

She stumbles in her clogs, remembering how mad Harry got when a door was left open by his partner Dirk, or Olla whenever she brought Dirk's yogurt.

Two visions flash as she clunks onto the concrete and past

the blinding dayglo motors, one red, one blue, flanking the doorway: Harry's head is caught in a machine; he's hanging from a tree out back.

Smoke from that truck still drifts in the glassy brilliance as Diane enters the shop. Nothing seems wrong at first--a belt flaps sililantly and pools of oil-colored light repose on the concrete floor. But...a sound like someone beating a rug in the housing project behind the shop. A dot bounces across the green screen of an oscilloscope upon the bench but Harry isn't there to watch it, small tools between the fingers of his right hand as he delicately turns something with his left.

He would often snap up from his concentration to find out who stood in the doorway, his brow fiercely wrinkled under the ceiling's florescent rods. (Seeing? A course in Seeing! Everybody sees except maybe fruity instructors with one name.) Why had he been so angry?

Diane plucks a five-dollar bill from her hair; carbon paper and money swirl around her as that beating from the outside takes on an insistence. She places the bill under a glowing wrench on the shredded workbench, her binoculars atop the wrench.

It's blinding in the shop, both open doorways swollen with sunlight, windows floating, reflections dashing everywhere as the wind snaps the greasy tags on the motors awaiting repair, and paper money whirls.

The entire shop becomes a loudspeaker amplifying those muffled, beating sounds from out back. Now there's stillness; after a bit, shaking leaves and...panting. And then the thumping anew.

Diane goes to the sound, blinking when she gets to the outside. What she can make out is a vertical string of blotches pushing at a larger blotch. After a while she realizes that her Harry comprises most of the vertical string, and that he is smashing a motor against a tree. The motor low in his big hands he swings upwards into the trunk, staggers when the motor bounces back. In the brightness everything looks green except for the multicolored wires vibrating from the motor and the brownish dust around his glistening head.

"Is it brushes?" she asks, whereupon he smashes up into the tree with greater force, and hunks of bark shoot into the bushes. The trouble often was brushes and Diane had visualized them as little plastic-handled potato brushes. Each head like Napoleon's hat, they whirled in the oil-smelling darkness inside the motor, keeping everything clean.

"They're made of carbon but never mind," he had told her--or is he saying it now? Diane's not sure as she strolls over.

The motor hanging low in his arms, he pants and gurgles. She lights a cigarette and puffs out into the dust around his head. "Picked up the new car!" she laughs, and the motor leaves his down-fanned hands to land on his foot and roll away into poison ivy. Diane blows smoke straight out as Harry stares down at his foot, a bright drop of green sweat pendant from his nose. A hotrodder screeches by in front and they both close their eyes in the mad shaking of leaves.

He looks like a man who has been dug up when she leads him over rusty beercans. "Everything's all right!" she maintains, stiffening him further.

At the buzzing car Diane scolds "All work and no play!" as Harry jerks his arm away, walks into the front end, bending half onto the hood. She leaves him there, saying "You find out what's making that awful noise." He drops his fingers on the glossy hood, pulls them back to watch his prints disappear. Diane is passing between the dayglo motors when Harry says "Nice machine..." but so slowly that he can study each syllable forming a vapor on the hood.

Once inside the shop she closes both doors and the money and carbon paper and receipts float down everywhere. After gathering it all into her handbag, along with the requisite binoculars, she sits down to write.

DIRK.....HOW IS OLLA AND MALCOLM....TOOK ALL THE MONEY....DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VACA.....LOVE DIANE.

She phones the auto club before her PS....TOOK HARRY SICK TRIP PA DUTCH.

The sun has been cut off as she gets back to the car, and Harry is behind the cloudy black windshield, looking like the truckdriver she had seen through her binoculars. The car buzzes flatly on but now Diane can see that the parking lights are lit. Once in the car she punches all the knobs until the buzz stops. "It's their fault," she announces as he tries to shudder. "Why don't they tell you about these buzzers and everything?" Harry gazes quizzically back to the shop. "Now don't you worry--I locked the doors." He starts to nod but forgets before the middle, sits there half erect and deeply puzzled.

"All work and no..." the car comes throatily to life, drowning her words, surprising her so much that she forgets to let go of the key and the starter grinds.

Searching for the brake release: "Dirk'll just have to take over. Olla's all right again and she's got *The Short World* in Seeing Class and so her life'll mean more. Dirk wouldn't let Malcolm go back to Rutgers, he's going to Glassboro State--but I'm sure they got drugs there, too, don't you think? Poor old Dirk! Can't keep Olla from trying to kill herself, least

pretending to, so he's always got to have time off and you got to do it all. And Olla even thinks she's in Yoga and it's closed, and imagine her and Malcolm smoking marijuana in that new kitchen! Mercy me it cost Dirk almost ten thousand to do it over and they're smoking marijuana in it. Oh why don't they tell you how to let go of the stupid brake? I got this pants suit half off at Leaders for the new carPink Fire's name of the color, and the clogs everybody's wearing. Pretty nice, hey?" She punches his arm and he falls instantly asleep. The sun returns to flare his few hairs brushing the soft ceiling.

She finds the lever to release the brake, and the car jackrabbits out of the parking lot, forcing a motorcyclist onto the shoulder. Behind his full black visor he seems to have no face. Harry grinds his teeth and snores; Diane drives fast.

After about ten minutes she wonders "Where can you pass? Lines I mean?"

"Nice machine," whispers Harry, his eyes like small eggs. A throb works around his temple, reminding her of the dot hopping across the green oscilloscope back in his shop.

"Just over the bridge and get on the expressway. That's what the man at the AAA told me. That goes right to the turnpike. You'll like it Harry. They still have horses but no electricity. They have beards too but that's not important with all the damn hippies."

The throb slides down from his forehead and into his cheek, and when she spies it fluttering near his mouth she digs into the accelerator. "Is eighty all right? Goes way past a hundred-- eighty don't seem much."

The trees click by faster and faster. Harry's jaw hangs in the whipping green, the wind whistling through his teeth and resonating in his mouth.

"Did you say something, Honey?" She is all but embracing the wheel when passing four thundering trucks, nips in to miss a skidding sportscar. "They're not safe I don't care what anybody says!" Harry stiffly rocks to change the sound of the wind in his mouth.

"Now you just relax," she counsels, remembering those little potato brushes swooshing around inside one of his motors, in the oil-fragrant darkness where everything's just perfect. Diane can even smell it in there.

Harry had folded his arms and closed his mouth, precisely when the speedometer needle split 9 and 0. Blood vessels pump around his jammed-shut eyes now. He tips his head like a swimmer trying to drain water from an ear, then moans as his eyes flick open. Showing more terror than pain, they glaze as if to allow the green and white day to speed up over them.

"Now now...a second is all it'll take to get you okay. Okay?" And she shakes out her handbag onto his lap in order to find the aspirin, but has to stop when the car catapults into a picnic area, eventually ramming an overflowing barrel. "They should tell you!" Diane insists when they finally lurch leftward to a stop. "It's no fair just to have the road come in here like that." Near the entrance a large Hispanic family hurriedly clears two tables and throws everything into the trunk of an old Buick. They're fishtailing off before Diane lights a cigarette. She wrenches her new sedan back onto the highway after a few, deeply puzzled puffs. Harry snores, but mumbles when the springs bottom "...all workkkkkk... Jack."

"I know what you're saying! My father said all of this was coming and we laughed at him." Harry sinks down as if shot. He can't know that Diane is summarizing Olla and Malcolm smokingdope in the new kitchen, Harry, himself, smashing a motor up into a tree, all the damn hippies on television, a car that persists in buzzing at you, and a road that becomes a picnic area hosting mobs of foreigners. "And we laughed at him. Imagine!"

Harry brightens "Nice machine."

You always did like my father," she encourages. "Now sit up and see how pretty everything is."

He tries but collapses against the door when she screeches up to a toll booth. She shifts among the money between them on the seat. "Just fifty cents, lady," the swarthy, heavy-set collector says, and she dreams about marrying him on TV--Dirk, squirming and cursing in a tight tux, would give her away, and Olla and Malcolm would be there too, coked up among the flowers. There would be a short memorial service in the middle for Harry, his love for motors etc.

Later on the Pennsylvania Turnpike she chooses her first flower girl, cracking jokes with Merv Griffin as the speedometer reads 100, and she looks fondly to Harry, almost as if he could see her TV fantasy too. But her turning to him makes all the colors bleed off her television and race across the windshield like multi-dyed water. "You had a shock! Little, whatchacallit, stroke or something." Harry sits up until his sparse hair hangs straight back in the tremendous wind.

"Oh my doesn't it go by just lovely when it's there? A hundred. It all goes by like water, everything like ziggley blurs." His jaw swings open and the wind pops repeatedly in his mouth. Then his eyes close for a long while; they crack slightlyas she propels the car past a rattling shipment of Volkswagon Beetles--then the light streams across his eyes like a green liquid. This sight catches Diane's breath and she slows

to ninety to look for aspirin again. "Get...couple in you. All work and no play...makes Harry..." But she forgets the aspirin to speed up again. Soon she's well past 100 and musing. "Malcolm'd say *uptight*, but Dirk made him transfer to Glassboro. Marijuana in the kitchen! There's no perfect crime you know, Harry. That stink on the cabinets?"

He is gripping the upholstery as if riding a sled, his yellowgreen face expressing waves of near-comprehension from time to time. Just before the Morgantown exit he jerks around, trying to remove his terrorized image from the windshield.

"Well well well! We have a tail wind or something?" The tall man leans from his booth into the car after taking the toll ticket.

"It's a mistake!" She tries to get the card back.

"Uh uh," he's shakes it. "This is a new record from your entrance, and time's punched right here! Plus, state police says I'm supposed to--"

This man was the minister when she married the previous toll taker on TV. She often put in personal appearances with people before she met them. "Aw c'mon now!" Diane pouts, noting in the mirror that the cream station wagon behind bounces up and down with kids, the driver resting his head and arms on the steering wheel. The toll collector momentarily turns his long head towards them to scowl, then looks back to Harry as Diane bursts "Getting my husband...doctor!"

"Gee Harry," as they turn onto 23, "maybe you should be going to a hospital like he yelled about. But I thought a Holiday Inn? Oh you'll be all right. Forget all those lousy brushes screwing up your stinking motors and Dirk and his crazy wife. She'll screw up *The Short World* and I'll have to do it. Honestly, what a pair!" He nods stiffly, getting more of what she says now and thinly smiling his triumph.

Under a fan-shaped tree of orange, a doctor in whitest white proclaims "You'll have to go on with your own life now, make your own plans."

"Harry is my life and I don't have any plans. Oh I am taking a course in the night school. *Seeing* it's called for some reason."

"Hold on to anything you can because the world's going by a hundred miles an hour. Now what's this seeing people before you see them? Can we talk about that?"

But before Diane can fully answer, this doctor launches up through the orange, feathery tree.

"I know!" Diane tells his white, disappearing feet, and her reflection in the windshield. "Everything's changing and the hippies want it all. They don't want to work."

Farms with quilted fields soon give way to billboards. They pass one billboard featuring a huge red W surrounded by coils of little w's. The next billboard, just before the car plunges into a valley orders STOP! AT THE WWW AND ASK FOR THE WORLD FAMOUS TOOFTER-ONE!!!!!! So Diane stops there. Bending Harry out of the car is hard but they must travel only a few feet to a table next to the hamburger fountain. This device is about twenty feet across and made of early plastic. A rusty pipe sticks up in the middle and water slides down its outside to wash over the rounded surface of the bun, wrinkling at the pocked meat, branching into dirty tributaries just before it arrives at the skirts of gray lettuce. Diane slaps the plastic hamburger and it pongs. "Isn't this cute, Harry?"

"Half...a horse," he answers as she releases him to fall into a metal chair which springs down to touch the ground, rises slowly up with Harry regal throughout.

She knows as his wife that he is referring to the size of the motor. "Is that a big one? Like the ones in front of the shop?" He rounds his mouth but can't push the word out just then; instead he leans over in the springy chair and drums a finger on the plastic hamburger like a doctor at a body. Diane stands aside to look through her binoculars. She discovers that three highways descend through mazes of wires to this home of the Dutch Wonderburger, and she studies each in turn. They're almost the same: gas stations and diners, all with blinking and turning signs, but one has a Dutch Pretzel-teria, above which an immense Dutchman leans over the valley holding a glowing pretzel with salt grains nearly as big as Harleys; further on down the hill she finds that Lil-Al's Ceramics features the world's largest ashtray. Diane focuses in a sign leaning against a farmhouse off another highway. It promises FAMOUS MURDER ENACTEDDAILY.

She puts the glasses down and licks her lips and staggers. "It's all coming down on you! It's all tumbling down on you!" Then she feels that all the sun-slicked wires are going to spark and explode, and therefore turns to Harry for solace and breath. He is presently crawling over the slippery hamburger, trying to peer inside, near the rusty pipe but slipping gradually back down the murky orange plastic. Diane pleads with him to come back but he has now scrabbled up to catch hold of the pipe. Water coats his hand. She crawls after him, her binoculars clunking and her clogs producing drum-like sounds. He can sense her reaching for him and furiously swings his free arm back in an attempt to knock her away.

They eventually land together at the feet of a boy who

seems to have steel wool pasted on his pink face. "Vill you eat?" he inquires. "Our cooking is vunderful good and kissing vears out but our cooking don't." The steel wool proves to be pasted on a flesh-colored mask which covers all but his cheekbones. The antenna of his walkie talkie whips in the mellowing sun, the back of that instrument covered with an order pad above which he is holding a pencil. But Diane drags on that arm to pull

herself up. She smoothes her hot pink slacks and directs a begging look at Harry to get him to assemble himself. After a minute she manages to get him to a chair, while the waiter stares blue-eyed above his patchy steel wool beard. "Whole horse!" insists Harry, riding his chair up and down.

"Sir?" the boy jerks the pencil back. "He means under the hamburger. Motor. It's his business." Chair still plunging and rising, Harry winds his arm as if mixing a stiff batter. The waiter crunches up his face, causing some steel wool to detach and float away in the wind flung off a passing tour bus.

"Oh really Honey! Well can you beat that?" she asks the waiter, who *Ma'm?*s her just before her revelation: "That hamburger turns!"

"I don't know. Never turned since I been here."

"Must've been pretty. Well leave it to Harry."

Diane is implored to order and finally does, the waiter writing fast. Harry's a bit on the smug side, his arms crossed and his chair calmed down. She orders two Dutch Wow-Burgers with french fries and two vanilla milkshakes. "And that's a Toofer One!" the boy crows into his mouthpiece. "On a Toofer One you only pay a half!" This last word echos from a circle of loudspeaker horns above the florescent cube of a kitchen under the WWW--ONLY HOME OF THE DUTCH WONDERBURGER sign. An enormous snap then as the waiter still broadcasts and "Vunderful good!" blast the horns, causing the salt and pepper shakers to dance on the couple's table. "Wow whirl wiggle!" the waiter continues.

Now the speakers snap and snap machine-gun fashion as the waiter experiences trouble with a switch on the walkie-talkie. "Wuh wuh wuh!" completes the extraordinarily magnified message.

"Well isn't that a lot of fuss for hamburgers?" Diane inquires of a brooding Harry. "For mercy's sake I wish my father could be here 'cause he saw it coming!--now don't you worry Honey'cause I'll get you back to all your lovely motors again. But you gotta play too, you know. Don't wanna be one of those dull old boys now, do you?" Some hunters amble by, their weapons pointed down, smiling at the waiter's shaking of the walkie talkie.

The chef's hat bobs vigorously in the kitchen, obscuring

for a moment the lights running green and blue and red on the steel wall behind him. At any rate, all is understood in the bright sealed cube--despite technical difficulties.

Still puffing the steel wool from his mouth, the waiter notes that the hunters are settling in at a table on the opposite side of the hamburger from Harry and Diane, next to a fence against which they can lean their rifles.

Diane dips a napkin in a puddle in the middle of the off-white table, wipes in a growing spiral as a boy in a porkpie hat and a fat, bearded man belly-flop onto the hamburger and start slapping each other in a game to force the opponent off.

A standoff as both slide off together into a giggling heap resembling a pile of rags. When they finally extract from each other and go to sit to the left of the hunters, the boy in the porkpie hat raises it with both hands and sticks out his tongue at Diane and Harry. Diane stares frozenly and goes back to her tablecleaning; Harry begins a shrug.

Leaning back against the fence now, their feet up on a table, the boy and the man make faces at Harry and Diane. The bearded man squeezes his belly through a tie-dyed sweatshirt with the head of Che Guevara inside a peace sign. At this point the hunters are circling the waiter and the antenna of the walkie-talkie whips around in their midst. Orange patches appear to migrate from their clothing into an afternoon of strangely diminished light. Their orders are transmitted to the loudspeakers after a screeching "Wonder wonder wonder whirl whirl...wuh wuh wuh!" introduction.

"Honestly!" Diane exclaims as Harry claps his hands over his ears and the fat man, who still rubs his belly, laughs. Diane decides to look past them all with her binoculars in order to study a sign in an adjoining lot poking up above the fence. She closes one eye since the glasses have become misaligned from the thumping they got when she crawled after Harry over the plastic hamburger. The sign proves to be a big fish and Diane notes layers of wood in its mouth. "L-laminated wood sculpture!" she pronounces, using her *Art Around You* course from last semester.

"No-O!shit?" the fat man hisses. Diane lowers her field of vision towards him...but first some fluttering cardboard signs intercede: WATCH FOR ANOTHER FISHFACE RESTAURANT OPENING HERE.

Now she has him in view, by aiming just over the hamburger, and he, in turn, is pointing back at her. "What did it do for you?" this fat man shouts. "I mean for us it was only a ride on a slippery hamburger." Purple bubbles in his mouth obscure these words and she leans forward, letting the binoculars drop on their strap. His companion in the porkpie is punching him on

the arm. "I mean no soul experience and we didn't make love to it." Diane ignores them to rewipe the table, this time from the outside in. Who can understand hippies anyway? But the new motions of the boy distract her. He is performing an antic dance on the gravel, windmilling his arms and shrieking like a jungle bird, the bearded man trying to seize him by his t-shirt. "I try to keep him off the grass," he pants, his mouth a golden purple in disintegrating, lavender-tinged darkness, "but he won't fuckin listen!" He manages to stop the boy and then lift him onto a chair. Harry's head falls to the table and Diane wipes absently around it.

Though the bearded man talks to the boy, whose hat has slipped completely over his eyes, he intends that Harry and Diane hear. "Don't let it shake you! They're just America. No use going into a shit fit about it. Anyway, the only way, my tyro, my amorous hick, to appreciate real art, I mean real American vomit-inducing art is to crawl over it." Very flushed he pumps up and down in his chair, his extraordinarily hairy head periodically blocking out most of the Fishface sculpture behind. "Don't you know, Arthur?" he continues, "Iron Mac and The Dutchess over there are true Americana. Let's bring them back to the college and seal them in plastic. Better yet let's bring the plastic here and seal them in with their beloved hamburger. We'll even throw in some itchy-kitchy koo Pennsylvania Dutch souvenirs. Wuh wuh wuh! Dutch Wonderburger! So eat a little and die in tourist heaven! Right, Iron Mac? Right, Dutchess?"

Harry has awakened and attempts to rise, vibrating. "Ho ho! Iron Mac is c-RANKING up!" The fat man spits on the hamburger, then hoists his eyes to survey the upper rim of the valley. "Hey its gets a little gloomy up dere--hope it's not anything I said. Chust wait a bit ve get some BIG light real soon! And-ddddddd! not a little heat, incidentally. And you chust wait a little, Iron Mac, you can cut out a cube of air and take it home to poison the dog."

When the bearded man screams "This is Tourist Heaven! Die in Tourist Heaven!" Harry's elbow slips off the table in an attempt to propel himself over the hamburger to get at the tormentors. The boy, fully recovered from his dance spasm, lifts up his hat again, revolves it over his head while wiggling his ears. "Look at that Arthur! Look at that!" stresses the fat man as Diane attempts to lift Harry's elbow back onto the table, "It's the Silent Majority in peace and war."

"Big deal. Big-IG deal!" Arthur comments, flicking his hat into Che Guevera on the fat man's sweatshirt. "Anyway this anthro- and -pology is your bag, Professor."

"It 's everybody's bag Arthur. Now listen! I used to laugh at fools, tolerate them--little like I tolerate you as a matter of fact." Slapping the boy's hat away: "But now I know that they have to go! Quicker they're...VAPOR, the better for the rest

of us." Harry starts banging the table. "Well Iron Mac doesn't want to hear, hey? But I will make you hear, Iron Mac! MAKE you, you middle-America cretin!"

On their left, the hunters shoot disgusted looks to the professor and Porkpie. "Poof! and it's all over. Poof poof poof!" continues the professor at Diane and Harry's expense. "I mean Arthur! Hey, can't explain a revolution to them! Right? They worry too much about the new car, and crawl over vomit-inducing art whenever the particular lust seizes them. In fact they're vomit-inducing art themselves. Ugh!"

"May be right, Doctor," Arthur spins his hat on a finger, "but what's this tolerating Arthur jazz? Wouldn't call it that myself-- don't know what the Dean'd call it."

"Not another threat of blackmail? Lover?" On the opposite side of the hamburger Diane leans forward. She has made Harry put his hands into his pockets.

The boy stares inside his hat. "My only blackmail would be...go away."

"Then go away or don't go away--it's the same thing. It's all play. All we do is play. Really! All I ever do is play!" He has shouted this last to Diane, adding "Better than Truly Truly Screen Romances, right Dutchess?"

"...could tell Dean," mutters Porkpie.

"Oh Arthur Arthur Arthur! Not again! You're so corrupt you reach a form of beauty, like Iron Mac and the Dutchess over there tight up to their beloved hamburger--like our own beloved college down the road, like our wonderful America herself. The professor sings "From the MOUN-tains, to the PRIV-legged, to the O-cean red with blood, God bless..."

"Wonder if they hear everything," Arthur snorts from the ground. He has thrown his hat onto the gravel, and has slid down to roll back and forth over it.

"They hear and don't hear and it's all the same to them. Typical Americans I tell you." "They don't play I suppose."

"No," and the professor gazes upwards as if for inspiration, "they work! Until they go crazy like Iron Mac, or hysterical in menopause like the Dutchess. Then they become tourists."

"Hoo hah! Hoo hah!" Porkpie rolls around more actively on the gravel, the approving professor smiling wetly, his beard purpling in the quicker-falling light.

"Play? Play?" squirms Harry in his flexible chair. Hands fluttering in his pockets, his face shows hatred in comprehending the word.

Arthur sits up and points over the hamburger. "Hey Iron Mac is really, like, whatchacallit, stirring. But why play pocket pool when the whosit, Dutchess, can do it for him?" Harry leaps up and flails his arms in their direction.

"Don't pay no attention Harry!" Diane pleads, embracing him. "The young one's gonna tell the whochacallit, dean." They seem to be performing a scruffing, shuffling dance--to the professor's and Arthur's hoots. While she is wrestling him back into his chair she cries "Where's those hamburgers?"

"In HEAVEN!" the professor squeals. "Where they droppeth from as a gentle rain upon the great shopping mall of Middle America beneath!" A hunter next to him along the fence shakes his head, and the professor shakes his head in imitation, working up to a furious pitch. When he stops, bug eyed, he steps up onto the flimsy, rocking table and proclaims "For the nonce Iron Mac has been quieted, but soon he'll join these huntergatherers and kill us for truth and beauty, right wing version--as visiblyrepresented by this egregious hamburger fountain. Aesthetic embodiment of American Capitalism. And it doesn't work! Beautiful! Iron Mac doesn't quite work either, except to shake all over every seven minutes. He's programmed by the Dutchess." Harry flicks his head from side to side trying to understand the professor's speech, looks of vague comprehension, anger, blankness, waving over his scarlet face.

Porkpie tugs the professor off the table by a leg, and the fat man escapes to spreadeagle onto the hamburger and bounces loudly off. He sits on the gravel now, Porkpie standing over him. "Come off of it Professor! Leave the guy alone. There's something wrong with him."

"Precisely what I've been saying, brilliant one." The professor springs up as efficiently as his bulk permits.

"Oh you been saying all kinds of things, all of them fuckin mixed up!"

The professor sits on his chair and brushes himself off. "Mixed up? Yes and no," he whispers. A dark breeze carries his words over the hamburger. "I am sort of a smorgasbord--Buddah and Machiavelli, Eastern religion and Western Logic, love and..."

"Yeah yeah sure!"

Diane suddenly pipes "And the farmer took another load away and why don't they turn the lights on?" While Harry applauds methodically, the professor smiles on the opposite side of the hamburger, nodding at them in a benign, paternal manner, his

hands over his belly, looking really quite peaceful now, as if the confrontation he and Porkpie had created had run its course. The waiter finally serves the married couple, his false beard looking more purple than black, the antenna on his walkie-talkie like a corosant in the strange heaviness of light.

"Arthur," the professor continues in this over-early oddly falling dusk, "you do have a kind of common sense. I'm impressed with your logic."

"You're tutoring me math--least that's why Mom's paying."

"Tutoring me math? You're illiterate, thinking skewed and syntax screwed."

"Anything you say."

"A provincial. In ten years or so you'll likely acquire enough polish and taste to admire this horrid Fishface sign behind me." In the darkening his surprising tone seems almost prayerful.

"Do say?" Porkpie weakly kicks pebbles against the fence.

"But keep watching old Fishface, Arthur. I wanted to give you a nice surprise for so long. It's going to be rather an historical point."

"Can't wait."

"Won't be long. I envy the Dutches with her powerful binoculars...sing her eyeballs."

They both must attend the hamburger, where a something has plopped, grayish, and now slides down the enormous bun. Diane is dabbing her blouse with a napkin.

"Milkshake Honey, milkshake. You get two for just paying for one. I know you don't like milkshakes but you don't have to throw..." "No-o!" his fist comes down on the table and a few glwoing french fries fly up against purple light.

"She that?" the professor asks the shrugging Porkpie. "It's a horror movie. I tell you they're surrealistic. Must be alumni of that institution down the road to which I've dedicated my life!--well the last few months anyway. Dedicated!" he screams at Harry, who begins ingesting handfuls of the incadescent french fries.

The hunters sneer at all of them. "Slobbo professor and the nutcases," one whispers.

"Dedicated! You don't scare me, Iron Mac. People like me are beginning to stand up to people like you. Dedicated!" and he leaps up and wrenches his arm at Harry as if throwing a ball.

"Well good for you!" Diane all but sobs.

Porkpie is pulling at the professor. "Sit down you fat freak! Will you sit down?" He pushes him into his chair which scrapes the fence behind him. "You won't last out the semester if you keep this crip-crap up."

"So?" The whites of the professor's eyes glisten in the nearly dead light. "Look around you. This is hell! The apotheosis of kitchy witchy koo in the bitsy-precious bark canoe. And here are the tourists! Iron Mac and the Dutchess--America's low life on the move. Watch the murder! Watch the murder, Iron Mac! Buy a replica of the knife with blood that's guaranteed not to come off! Oh and here's a naughty doll, two really. A T000FER ONE! Dutchman and his wife screwing--made in Japan." He is sobbing now, the bubbles in his mouth black. "And here I tried to bring music, here I tried to light up mean lives."

"With pot I suppose!"

"A one-time thing!" the professor recovers, "I'm high on culture!" Behind him the merest orange-y sliver of exhausted sunlight brightens the glue between the layers of wood in the dark mouth of the Fishface sign. Harry and Diane eat mechanically; Porkpie pings stones off the plastic hamburger while saying "My Pop he don't want me hanging around with you no more."

The professor covers his face with his hands, rubs his beard, and then finally whispers "I'm your passport from the Dutch Wonderburger you're hitting with those rocks. World's largest ashtray, ugh! If it weren't all so tragically awful it'd be funny."

"You two disgraces!" Diane rejoins, "are the funny ones."

The professor is too far into his description to take notice. "That plastic grinning idiot standing up there and blessing us with his monster pretzel like the Pope! And ALL the winking, blinking, turning WIRES! STRANGling you!" He has put his hands around his throat. Knuckles phosphorescent he gasps "This is the bottom of hell and I'm the devil trapped in ice!" grasping his throat and choking himself at the end, his sweatshirt darkening under the arms.

"Never thought devil be so fat," Porkpie sneers as the professor's eyeballs bulge, the whites appearing to float. "He thinks he's kidding, but he may be killing himself," Diane informs the sudden policeman, a young, husky man who laughs "He's at the college."

"Well they're hippies or something--and awful mean." Harry slowly nods, french fries in his mouth like cigarettes.

"That's not breaking the law, Ma'm."

"Law and Order, Law and Order, lock up your daughters!" comes the professor's cracked and husky voice over the hamburger. Porkpie
Frank B. Ford
GREENE STREET ARTISTS' BUILDING
5225 Greene Street

Philadelphia, PA 191442927
(215)8487385

The Hamburger

Diane is returning to the buzzing car when a trailer truck roars and shimmers. She halts because she can no longer hear her clogs on the gravel of the parking lot, then raises binoculars to see the driver hunched behind the sun-smeared glass...huge blue letters of the trailer shaking by.

"It's like a desert," she announces, squinting as the binoculars fall on their swinging strap when she whirls round to look through the windows of Harry's shop. Everything there seems jumping and coated with mercury, and Diane jams her eyes shut in order to think about her teacher.

What if he made that face if she said that things shook in the heat like things on a desert? Well then she would just tell him, once again, "I'm only in Seeing 'cause Yoga is closed!"

If he didn't like it, someone else could take *The Long World* and go around looking through binoculars at everything. Of course Diane couldn't drop out if Olla didn't. Olla had *The Short World* but didn't come. Diane and a few hippies met with Liege that first night to hear Liege discuss what seeing *wasn't*. He informed the class, too, that he had chosen his name just for this course, and that he used different names in everything he did. He asked Diane what she thought of this idea. Diane didn't think anything.

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Now she decides to let Harry fix the buzzing of the car, and walks towards the shop again. There the open door frames a cold greenish light which floats like a balloon.

She stumbles in her clogs, remembering how mad Harry got when a door was left open by his partner Dirk, or Olla whenever she brought Dirk's yogurt.

Two visions flash as she clunks onto the concrete and past the blinding dayglo motors, one red, one blue, flanking the doorway: Harry's head is caught in a machine; he's hanging from a tree out back.

Smoke from that truck still drifts in the glassy brilliance as Diane enters the shop. Nothing seems wrong at first--a belt flaps silently and pools of oil-colored light repose on the concrete floor. But...a sound like someone beating a rug in the housing project behind the shop. A dot bounces across the green screen of an oscilloscope upon the bench but Harry isn't there to watch it, small tools between the fingers of his right hand

as he delicately turns something with his left.

He would often snap up from his concentration to find out who stood in the doorway, his brow fiercely wrinkled under the ceiling's florescent rods. (Seeing? A course in Seeing! Everybody sees except maybe fruity instructors with one name.) Why had he been so angry?

Diane plucks a five-dollar bill from her hair; carbon paper and money swirl around her as that beating from the outside takes on an insistence. She places the bill under a glowing wrench on the shredded workbench, her binoculars atop the wrench.

It's blinding in the shop, both open doorways swollen with sunlight, windows floating, reflections dashing everywhere as the wind snaps the greasy tags on the motors awaiting repair, and paper money whirls.

The entire shop becomes a loudspeaker amplifying those muffled, beating sounds from out back. Now there's stillness; after a bit, shaking leaves and...panting. And then the thumping anew.

Diane goes to the sound, blinking when she gets to the outside. What she can make out is a vertical string of blotches pushing at a larger blotch. After a while she realizes that her Harry comprises most of the vertical string, and that he is smashing a motor against a tree. The motor low in his big hands he swings upwards into the trunk, staggers when the motor bounces back. In the brightness everything looks green except for the multicolored wires vibrating from the motor and the brownish dust around his glistening head.

"Is it brushes?" she asks, whereupon he smashes up into the tree with greater force, and hunks of bark shoot into the bushes. The trouble often was brushes and Diane had visualized them as little plastic-handled potato brushes. Each head like Napoleon's hat, they whirled in the oil-smelling darkness inside the motor, keeping everything clean.

"They're made of carbon but never mind," he had told her-- or is he saying it now? Diane's not sure as she strolls over. The motor hanging low in his arms, he pants and gurgles. She lights a cigarette and puffs out into the dust around his head. "Picked up the new car!" she laughs, and the motor leaves his down-fanned hands to land on his foot and roll away into poison ivy. Diane blows smoke straight out as Harry stares down at his foot, a bright drop of green sweat pendant from his nose. A hotrodder screeches by in front and they both close their eyes in the mad shaking of leaves.

He looks like a man who has been dug up when she leads him over rusty beercans. "Everything's all right!" she maintains,

stiffening him further.

At the buzzing car Diane scolds "All work and no play!" as Harry jerks his arm away, walks into the front end, bending half onto the hood. She leaves him there, saying "You find out what's making that awful noise." He drops his fingers on the glossy hood, pulls them back to watch his prints disappear. Diane is passing between the dayglo motors when Harry says "Nice machine..." but so slowly that he can study each syllable forming a vapor on the hood.

Once inside the shop she closes both doors and the money and carbon paper and receipts float down everywhere. After gathering it all into her handbag, along with the requisite binoculars, she sits down to write.

DIRK.....HOW IS OLLA AND MALCOLM....TOOK ALL THE
MONEY....DID YOU ENJOY YOUR VACA.....LOVE DIANE.

She phones the auto club before her PS....TOOK HARRY SICK
TRIP PA DUTCH.

The sun has been cut off as she gets back to the car, and Harry is behind the cloudy black windshield, looking like the truckdriver she had seen through her binoculars. The car buzzes flatly on but now Diane can see that the parking lights are lit. Once in the car she punches all the knobs until the buzz stops. "It's their fault," she announces as he tries to shudder. "Why don't they tell you about these buzzers and everything?" Harry gazes quizzically back to the shop. "Now don't you worry--I locked the doors." He starts to nod but forgets before the middle, sits there half erect and deeply puzzled.

"All work and no..." the car comes throatily to life, drowning her words, surprising her so much that she forgets to let go of the key and the starter grinds.

Searching for the brake release: "Dirk'll just have to take over. Olla's all right again and she's got *The Short World* in Seeing Class and so her life'll mean more. Dirk wouldn't let Malcolm go back to Rutgers, he's going to Glassboro State--but I'm sure they got drugs there, too, don't you think? Poor old Dirk! Can't keep Olla from trying to kill herself, least pretending to, so he's always got to have time off and you got to do it all. And Olla even thinks she's in Yoga and it's closed, and imagine her and Malcolm smoking marijuana in that new kitchen! Mercy me it cost Dirk almost ten thousand to do it over and they're smoking marijuana in it. Oh why don't they tell you how to let go of the stupid brake? I got this pants suit half off at Leaders for the new carPink Fire's name of the color, and the clogs everybody's wearing. Pretty nice, hey?" She punches his arm and he falls instantly asleep. The sun returns to flare his few hairs brushing the soft ceiling.

She finds the lever to release the brake, and the car jackrabbits out of the parking lot, forcing a motorcyclist onto the shoulder. Behind his full black visor he seems to have no face. Harry grinds his teeth and snores; Diane drives fast.

After about ten minutes she wonders "Where can you pass? Lines I mean?"

"Nice machine," whispers Harry, his eyes like small eggs. A throb works around his temple, reminding her of the dot hopping across the green oscilloscope back in his shop.

"Just over the bridge and get on the expressway. That's what the man at the AAA told me. That goes right to the turnpike. You'll like it Harry. They still have horses but no electricity. They have beards too but that's not important with all the damn hippies."

The throb slides down from his forehead and into his cheek, and when she spies it fluttering near his mouth she digs into the accelerator. "Is eighty all right? Goes way past a hundred-- eighty don't seem much."

The trees click by faster and faster. Harry's jaw hangs in the whipping green, the wind whistling through his teeth and resonating in his mouth.

"Did you say something, Honey?" She is all but embracing the wheel when passing four thundering trucks, nips in to miss a skidding sportscar. "They're not safe I don't care what anybody says!" Harry stiffly rocks to change the sound of the wind in his mouth.

"Now you just relax," she counsels, remembering those little potato brushes swooshing around inside one of his motors, in the oil-fragrant darkness where everything's just perfect. Diane can even smell it in there.

Harry had folded his arms and closed his mouth, precisely when the speedometer needle split 9 and 0. Blood vessels pump around his jammed-shut eyes now. He tips his head like a swimmer trying to drain water from an ear, then moans as his eyes flick open. Showing more terror than pain, they glaze as if to allow the green and white day to speed up over them.

"Now now...a second is all it'll take to get you okay. Okay?" And she shakes out her handbag onto his lap in order to find the aspirin, but has to stop when the car catapults into a picnic area, eventually ramming an overflowing barrel. "They should tell you!" Diane insists when they finally lurch leftward to a stop. "It's no fair just to have the road come in here like that." Near the entrance a large Hispanic family hurriedly clears two tables and throws everything into the trunk of an old Buick. They're fishtailing off before Diane lights a cigarette. She wrenches her new sedan back onto the highway after a few,

deeply puzzled puffs. Harry snores, but mumbles when the springs bottom "...all workkkkkk... Jack."

"I know what you're saying! My father said all of this was coming and we laughed at him." Harry sinks down as if shot. He can't know that Diane is summarizing Olla and Malcolm smokingdope in the new kitchen, Harry, himself, smashing a motor up into a tree, all the damn hippies on television, a car that persists in buzzing at you, and a road that becomes a picnic area hosting mobs of foreigners. "And we laughed at him. Imagine!"

Harry brightens "Nice machine."

You always did like my father," she encourages. "Now sit up and see how pretty everything is."

He tries but collapses against the door when she screeches up to a toll booth. She shifts among the money between them on the seat. "Just fifty cents, lady," the swarthy, heavy-set collector says, and she dreams about marrying him on TV--Dirk, squirming and cursing in a tight tux, would give her away, and Olla and Malcolm would be there too, coked up among the flowers. There would be a short memorial service in the middle for Harry, his love for motors etc.

Later on the Pennsylvania Turnpike she chooses her first flower girl, cracking jokes with Merv Griffin as the speedometer reads 100, and she looks fondly to Harry, almost as if he could see her TV fantasy too. But her turning to him makes all the colors bleed off her television and race across the windshield like multi-dyed water. "You had a shock! Little, whatchacallit, stroke or something." Harry sits up until his sparse hair hangs straight back in the tremendous wind.

"Oh my doesn't it go by just lovely when it's there? A hundred. It all goes by like water, everything like ziggley blurs." His jaw swings open and the wind pops repeatedly in his mouth. Then his eyes close for a long while; they crack slightlyas she propels the car past a rattling shipment of Volkswagon Beetles--then the light streams across his eyes like a green liquid. This sight catches Diane's breath and she slows to ninety to look for aspirin again. "Get...couple in you. All work and no play...makes Harry..." But she forgets the aspirin to speed up again. Soon she's well past 100 and musing. "Malcolm'd say *uptight*, but Dirk made him transfer to Glassboro. Marijuana in the kitchen! There's no perfect crime you know, Harry. That stink on the cabinets?"

He is gripping the upholstery as if riding a sled, his yellowgreen face expressing waves of near-comprehension from time to time. Just before the Morgantown exit he jerks around, trying to remove his terrorized image from the windshield.

"Well well well! We have a tail wind or something?" The tall man leans from his booth into the car after taking the toll ticket.

"It's a mistake!" She tries to get the card back.

"Uh uh," he's shakes it. "This is a new record from your entrance, and time's punched right here! Plus, state police says I'm supposed to--"

This man was the minister when she married the previous toll taker on TV. She often put in personal appearances with people before she met them. "Aw c'mon now!" Diane pouts, noting in the mirror that the cream station wagon behind bounces up and down with kids, the driver resting his head and arms on the steering wheel. The toll collector momentarily turns his long head towards them to scowl, then looks back to Harry as Diane bursts "Getting my husband...doctor!"

"Gee Harry," as they turn onto 23, "maybe you should be going to a hospital like he yelled about. But I thought a Holiday Inn? Oh you'll be all right. Forget all those lousy brushes screwing up your stinking motors and Dirk and his crazy wife. She'll screw up *The Short World* and I'll have to do it. Honestly, what a pair!" He nods stiffly, getting more of what she says now and thinly smiling his triumph.

Under a fan-shaped tree of orange, a doctor in whitest white proclaims "You'll have to go on with your own life now, make your own plans."

"Harry is my life and I don't have any plans. Oh I am taking a course in the night school. *Seeing* it's called for some reason."

"Hold on to anything you can because the world's going by a hundred miles an hour. Now what's this seeing people before you see them? Can we talk about that?"

But before Diane can fully answer, this doctor launches up through the orange, feathery tree.

"I know!" Diane tells his white, disappearing feet, and her reflection in the windshield. "Everything's changing and the hippies want it all. They don't want to work."

Farms with quilted fields soon give way to billboards. They pass one billboard featuring a huge red W surrounded by coils of little w's. The next billboard, just before the car plunges into a valley orders STOP! AT THE WWW AND ASK FOR THE WORLD FAMOUS TOOFER-ONE!!!!!! So Diane stops there. Bending Harry out of the car is hard but they must travel only a few feet to a table next to the hamburger fountain. This device is about twenty feet across and made of early plastic. A rusty pipe sticks up in the middle and water slides down its outside to wash over the rounded surface of the bun,

wrinkling at the pocked meat, branching into dirty tributaries just before it arrives at the skirts of gray lettuce. Diane slaps the plastic hamburger and it pongs. "Isn't this cute, Harry?"

"Half...a horse," he answers as she releases him to fall into a metal chair which springs down to touch the ground, rises slowly up with Harry regal throughout.

She knows as his wife that he is referring to the size of the motor. "Is that a big one? Like the ones in front of the shop?" He rounds his mouth but can't push the word out just then; instead he leans over in the springy chair and drums a finger on the plastic hamburger like a doctor at a body. Diane stands aside to look through her binoculars. She discovers that three highways descend through mazes of wires to this home of the Dutch Wonderburger, and she studies each in turn. They're almost the same: gas stations and diners, all with blinking and turning signs, but one has a Dutch Pretzel-teria, above which an immense Dutchman leans over the valley holding a glowing pretzel with salt grains nearly as big as Harleys; further on down the hill she finds that Lil-Al's Ceramics features the world's largest ashtray. Diane focuses in a sign leaning against a farmhouse off another highway. It promises FAMOUS MURDER ENACTEDDAILY.

She puts the glasses down and licks her lips and staggers. "It's all coming down on you! It's all tumbling down on you!" Then she feels that all the sun-slicked wires are going to spark and explode, and therefore turns to Harry for solace and breath. He is presently crawling over the slippery hamburger, trying to peer inside, near the rusty pipe but slipping gradually back down the murky orange plastic. Diane pleads with him to come back but he has now scrabbled up to catch hold of the pipe. Water coats his hand. She crawls after him, her binoculars clunking and her clogs producing drum-like sounds. He can sense her reaching for him and furiously swings his free arm back in an attempt to knock her away.

They eventually land together at the feet of a boy who seems to have steel wool pasted on his pink face. "Vill you eat?" he inquires. "Our cooking is vunderful good and kissing vears out but our cooking don't." The steel wool proves to be pasted on a flesh-colored mask which covers all but his cheekbones. The antenna of his walkie talkie whips in the mellowing sun, the back of that instrument covered with an order pad above which he is holding a pencil. But Diane drags on that arm to pull herself up. She smoothes her hot pink slacks and directs a begging look at Harry to get him to assemble himself. After a

minute she manages to get him to a chair, while the waiter stares blue-eyed above his patchy steel wool beard. "Whole horse!" insists Harry, riding his chair up and down.

"Sir?" the boy jerks the pencil back. "He means under the hamburger. Motor. It's his business." Chair still plunging and rising, Harry winds his arm as if mixing a stiff batter. The waiter crunches up his face, causing some steel wool to detach and float away in the wind flung off a passing tour bus.

"Oh really Honey! Well can you beat that?" she asks the waiter, who *Ma'm?s* her just before her revelation: "That hamburger turns!"

"I don't know. Never turned since I been here."

"Must've been pretty. Well leave it to Harry."

Diane is implored to order and finally does, the waiter writing fast. Harry's a bit on the smug side, his arms crossed and his chair calmed down. She orders two Dutch Wow-Burgers with french fries and two vanilla milkshakes. "And that's a Toofer One!" the boy crows into his mouthpiece. "On a Toofer One you only pay a half!" This last word echos from a circle of loudspeaker horns above the florescent cube of a kitchen under the WWW--ONLY HOME OF THE DUTCH WONDERBURGER sign. An enormous snap then as the waiter still broadcasts and "Vunderful good!" blast the horns, causing the salt and pepper shakers to dance on the couple's table. "Wow whirl wiggle!" the waiter continues.

Now the speakers snap and snap machine-gun fashion as the waiter experiences trouble with a switch on the walkie-talkie. "Wuh wuh wuh!" completes the extraordinarily magnified message.

"Well isn't that a lot of fuss for hamburgers?" Diane inquires of a brooding Harry. "For mercy's sake I wish my father could be here 'cause he saw it coming!--now don't you worry Honey'cause I'll get you back to all your lovely motors again. But you gotta play too, you know. Don't wanna be one of those dull old boys now, do you?" Some hunters amble by, their weapons pointed down, smiling at the waiter's shaking of the walkie talkie.

The chef's hat bobs vigorously in the kitchen, obscuring for a moment the lights running green and blue and red on the steel wall behind him. At any rate, all is understood in the bright sealed cube--despite technical difficulties.

Still puffing the steel wool from his mouth, the waiter notes that the hunters are settling in at a table on the opposite side of the hamburger from Harry and Diane, next to a fence against which they can lean their rifles.

Diane dips a napkin a a puddle in the middle of the off-white table, wipes in a growing spiral as a boy in a porkpie hat and a fat, bearded man belly-flop onto the hamburger and start

slapping each other in a game to to force the opponent off.

A standoff as both slide off together into a giggling heap resembling a pile of rags. When they finally extract from each other and go to sit to the left of the hunters, the boy in the porkpie hat raises it with both hands and sticks out his tongue at Diane and Harry. Diane stares frozenly and goes back to her tablecleaning; Harry begins a shrug.

Leaning back against the fence now, their feet up on a table, the boy and the man make faces at Harry and Diane. The bearded man squeezes his belly through a tie-dyed sweatshirt with the head of Che Guevara inside a peace sign. At this point the hunters are circling the waiter and the antenna of the walkie-talkie whips around in their midst. Orange patches appear to migrate from their clothing into an afternoon of strangely diminished light. Their orders are transmitted to the loudspeakers after a screeching "Wonder wonder wonder whirl whirl whirl...wuh wuh wuh!" introduction.

"Honestly!" Diane exclaims as Harry claps his hands over his ears and the fat man, who still rubs his belly, laughs. Diane decides to look past them all with her binoculars in order to study a sign in an adjoining lot poking up above the fence. She closes one eye since the glasses have become misaligned from the thumping they got when she crawled after Harry over the plastic hamburger. The sign proves to be a big fish and Diane notes layers of wood in its mouth. "L-laminated wood sculpture!" she pronounces, using her *Art Around You* course from last semester.

"No-0!shit?" the fat man hisses. Diane lowers her field of vision towards him...but first some fluttering cardboard signs intercede: WATCH FOR ANOTHER FISHFACE RESTAURANT OPENING HERE.

Now she has him in view, by aiming just over the hamburger, and he, in turn, is pointing back at her. "What did it do for you?" this fat man shouts. "I mean for us it was only a ride on a slippery hamburger." Purple bubbles in his mouth obscure these words and she leans forward, letting the binoculars drop on their strap. His companion in the porkpie is punching him on the arm. "I mean no soul experience and we didn't make love to it." Diane ignores them to rewipe the table, this time from the outside in. Who can understand hippies anyway? But the new motions of the boy distract her. He is performing an antic dance on the gravel, windmilling his arms and shrieking like a jungle bird, the bearded man trying to seize him by his t-shirt. "I try to keep him off the grass," he pants, his mouth a golden purple in disintegrating, lavender-tinged darkness, "but he won't fuckin listen!" He manages to stop the boy and then lift him onto a chair. Harry's head falls to the table and Diane

wipes absently around it.

Though the bearded man talks to the boy, whose hat has slipped completely over his eyes, he intends that Harry and Diane hear. "Don't let it shake you! They're just America. No use going into a shit fit about it. Anyway, the only way, my tyro, my amorous hick, to appreciate real art, I mean real American vomit-inducing art is to crawl over it." Very flushed he pumps up and down in his chair, his extraordinarily hairy head periodically blocking out most of the Fishface sculpture behind. "Don't you know, Arthur?" he continues, "Iron Mac and The Dutchess over there are true Americana. Let's bring them back to the college and seal them in plastic. Better yet let's bring the plastic here and seal them in with their beloved hamburger. We'll even throw in some itchy-kitchy koo Pennsylvania Dutch souvenirs. Wuh wuh wuh! Dutch Wonderburger! So eat a little and die in tourist heaven! Right, Iron Mac? Right, Dutchess?"

Harry has awakened and attempts to rise, vibrating. "Ho ho! Iron Mac is c-RANKING up!" The fat man spits on the hamburger, then hoists his eyes to survey the upper rim of the valley. "Hey its gets a little gloomy up dere--hope it's not anything I said. Chust wait a bit ve get some BIG light real soon! And-ddddddd! not a little heat, incidentally. And you chust wait a little, Iron Mac, you can cut out a cube of air and take it home to poison the dog."

When the bearded man screams "This is Tourist Heaven! Die in Tourist Heaven!" Harry's elbow slips off the table in an attempt to propel himself over the hamburger to get at the tormentors. The boy, fully recovered from his dance spasm, lifts up his hat again, revolves it over his head while wiggling his ears. "Look at that Arthur! Look at that!" stresses the fat man as Diane attempts to lift Harry's elbow back onto the table, "It's the Silent Majority in peace and war."

"Big deal. Big-IG deal!" Arthur comments, flicking his hat into Che Guevera on the fat man's sweatshirt. "Anyway this anthro- and -pology is your bag, Professor."

"It 's everybody's bag Arthur. Now listen! I used to laugh at fools, tolerate them--little like I tolerate you as a matter of fact." Slapping the boy's hat away: "But now I know that they have to go! Quicker they're...VAPOR, the better for the rest

of us." Harry starts banging the table. "Well Iron Mac doesn't want to hear, hey? But I will make you hear, Iron Mac! MAKE you, you middle-America cretin!"

On their left, the hunters shoot disgusted looks to the professor and Porkpie. "Poof! and it's all over. Poof poof

poof!" continues the professor at Diane and Harry's expense. "I mean Arthur! Hey, can't explain a revolution to them! Right? They worry too much about the new car, and crawl over vomit-inducing art whenever the particular lust seizes them. In fact they're vomit-inducing art themselves. Ugh!"

"May be right, Doctor," Arthur spins his hat on a finger, "but what's this tolerating Arthur jazz? Wouldn't call it that myself-- don't know what the Dean'd call it."

"Not another threat of blackmail? Lover?" On the opposite side of the hamburger Diane leans forward. She has made Harry put his hands into his pockets.

The boy stares inside his hat. "My only blackmail would be...go away."

"Then go away or don't go away--it's the same thing. It's all play. All we do is play. Really! All I ever do is play!" He has shouted this last to Diane, adding "Better than Truly Truly Screen Romances, right Dutchess?"

"...could tell Dean," mutters Porkpie.

"Oh Arthur Arthur Arthur! Not again! You're so corrupt you reach a form of beauty, like Iron Mac and the Dutchess over there tight up to their beloved hamburger--like our own beloved college down the road, like our wonderful America herself. The professor sings "From the MOUN-tains, to the PRIV-legged, to the O-cean red with blood, God bless..."

"Wonder if they hear everything," Arthur snorts from the ground. He has thrown his hat onto the gravel, and has slid down to roll back and forth over it.

"They hear and don't hear and it's all the same to them. Typical Americans I tell you." "They don't play I suppose."

"No," and the professor gazes upwards as if for inspiration, "they work! Until they go crazy like Iron Mac, or hysterical in menopause like the Dutchess. Then they become tourists."

"Hoo hah! Hoo hah!" Porkpie rolls around more actively on the gravel, the approving professor smiling wetly, his beard purpling in the quicker-falling light.

"Play? Play?" squirms Harry in his flexible chair. Hands fluttering in his pockets, his face shows hatred in comprehending the word.

Arthur sits up and points over the hamburger. "Hey Iron Mac is really, like, whatchacallit, stirring. But why play pocket pool when the whosit, Dutchess, can do it for him?" Harry leaps up and flails his arms in their direction.

"Don't pay no attention Harry!" Diane pleads, embracing him. "The young one's gonna tell the whochacallit, dean." They seem to be performing a scruffing, shuffling dance--to the

professor's and Arthur's hoots. While she is wrestling him back into his chair she cries "Where's those hamburgers?"

"In HEAVEN!" the professor squeals. "Where they droppeth from as a gentle rain upon the great shopping mall of Middle America beneath!" A hunter next to him along the fence shakes his head, and the professor shakes his head in imitation, working up to a furious pitch. When he stops, bug eyed, he steps up onto the flimsy, rocking table and proclaims "For the nonce Iron Mac has been quieted, but soon he'll join these huntergatherers and kill us for truth and beauty, right wing version--as visiblyrepresented by this egregious hamburger fountain. Aesthetic embodiment of American Capitalism. And it doesn't work! Beautiful! Iron Mac doesn't quite work either, except to shake all over every seven minutes. He's programmed by the Dutchess." Harry flicks his head from side to side trying to understand the professor's speech, looks of vague comprehension, anger, blankness, waving over his scarlet face.

Porkpie tugs the professor off the table by a leg, and the fat man escapes to spreadeagle onto the hamburger and bounces loudly off. He sits on the gravel now, Porkpie standing over him. "Come off of it Professor! Leave the guy alone. There's something wrong with him."

"Precisely what I've been saying, brilliant one." The professor springs up as efficiently as his bulk permits.

"Oh you been saying all kinds of things, all of them fuckin mixed up!"

The professor sits on his chair and brushes himself off. "Mixed up? Yes and no," he whispers. A dark breeze carries his words over the hamburger. "I am sort of a smorgasbord--Buddah and Machiavelli, Eastern religion and Western Logic, love and..."

"Yeah yeah sure!"

Diane suddenly pipes "And the farmer took another load away and why don't they turn the lights on?" While Harry applauds methodically, the professor smiles on the opposite side of the hamburger, nodding at them in a benign, paternal manner, his hands over his belly, looking really quite peaceful now, as if the confrontation he and Porkpie had created had run its course. The waiter finally serves the married couple, his false beard looking more purple than black, the antenna on his walkie-talkie like a corporasant in the strange heaviness of light.

"Arthur," the professor continues in this over-early oddly falling dusk, "you do have a kind of common sense. I'm impressed with your logic."

"You're tutoring me math--least that's why Mom's paying."

"Tutoring me math? You're illiterate, thinking skewed and

syntax screwed."

"Anything you say."

"A provincial. In ten years or so you'll likely acquire enough polish and taste to admire this horrid Fishface sign behind me." In the darkening his surprising tone seems almost prayerful.

"Do say?" Porkpie weakly kicks pebbles against the fence.

"But keep watching old Fishface, Arthur. I wanted to give you a nice surprise for so long. It's going to be rather an historical point."

"Can't wait."

"Won't be long. I envy the Dutches with her powerful binoculars...sing her eyeballs."

They both must attend the hamburger, where a something has plopped, grayish, and now slides down the enormous bun. Diane is dabbing her blouse with a napkin.

"Milkshake Honey, milkshake. You get two for just paying for one. I know you don't like milkshakes but you don't have to throw..." "No-o!" his fist comes down on the table and a few glwoing french fries fly up against purple light.

"She that?" the professor asks the shrugging Porkpie.

"It's a horror movie. I tell you they're surrealistic. Must be alumni of that institution down the road to which I've dedicated my life!--well the last few months anyway. Dedicated!" he screams at Harry, who begins ingesting handfuls of the incadescent french fries.

The hunters sneer at all of them. "Slobbo professor and the nutcases," one whispers.

"Dedicated! You don't scare me, Iron Mac. People like me are beginning to stand up to people like you. Dedicated!" and he leaps up and wrenches his arm at Harry as if throwing a ball.

"Well good for you!" Diane all but sobs.

Porkpie is pulling at the professor. "Sit down you fat freak! Will you sit down?" He pushes him into his chair which scrapes the fence behind him. "You won't last out the semester if you keep this crip-crap up."

"So?" The whites of the professor's eyes glisten in the nearly dead light. "Look around you. This is hell! The apotheosis of kitchy witchy koo in the bitsy-precious bark canoe. And here are the tourists! Iron Mac and the Dutches--America's low life on the move. Watch the murder! Watch the murder, Iron Mac! Buy a replica of the knife with blood that's guaranteed not to come off! Oh and here's a naughty doll, two really. A T000FER ONE! Dutchman and his wife screwing--made in Japan." He is sobbing now, the bubbles in his mouth black.

"And here I tried to bring music, here I tried to light up mean

lives."

"With pot I suppose!"

"A one-time thing!" the professor recovers, "I'm high on culture!" Behind him the merest orange-y sliver of exhausted sunlight brightens the glue between the layers of wood in the dark mouth of the Fishface sign. Harry and Diane eat mechanically; Porkpie pings stones off the plastic hamburger while saying "My Pop he don't want me hanging around with you no more."

The professor covers his face with his hands, rubs his beard, and then finally whispers "I'm your passport from the Dutch Wonderburger you're hitting with those rocks. World's largest ashtray, ugh! If it weren't all so tragically awful it'd be funny."

"You two disgraces!" Diane rejoins, "are the funny ones."

The professor is too far into his description to take notice. "That plastic grinning idiot standing up there and blessing us with his monster pretzel like the Pope! And ALL the winking, blinking, turning WIRES! STRANGling you!" He has put his hands around his throat. Knuckles phosphorescent he gasps "This is the bottom of hell and I'm the devil trapped in ice!" grasping his throat and choking himself at the end, his sweatshirt darkening under the arms.

"Never thought devil be so fat," Porkpie sneers as the professor's eyeballs bulge, the whites appearing to float. "He thinks he's kidding, but he may be killing himself," Diane informs the sudden policeman, a young, husky man who laughs "He's at the college."

"Well they're hippies or something--and awful mean." Harry slowly nods, french fries in his mouth like cigarettes.

"That's not breaking the law, Ma'm."

"Law and Order, Law and Order, lock up your daughters!" comes the professor's cracked and husky voice over the hamburger. Porkpie shuffles away when this young policeman points a finger, but the professor responds "I know...that's enough. Everybody's always telling me that but..." he glimpses at his watch, turning it to see in the marginal glow, "last laugh's due in three. Synchronize your...consciences!" He tilts his chair back to lean against the fence, stares up into the nearly black sky. "Going to rain. See it up there? Local rain...no water. Hope it doesn't spoil anybody's parade."

"My husband's sick and we're on vacation--that's why I went fast," Diane tells the chubby policeman who has been shrugging at the professor's act--which continues to merit the locked-on stare of Harry and of the hunters.

"I'm just suppose to check everyone's idents," the

policeman laughs. "Driver's license or something?"

"Is is anything about Olla," she inquires.

He rubs the protruding stomach of his uniform shirt and wrinkles his forehead as she searches the pocketbook, money fluttering darkly out at her wrists. "How you spell this here...?" consulting his notebook. "No this one is E-u-l-l-i-a...can't read the rest."

"Olla's O-l. Her husband's Harry's partner." The waiter comes by, appearing moulted now. "Wonder whirl wiggle not once but twice! It's a double Toofer-One!" squawk the loudspeakers out into the gloom.

"Is such a MIRACLE possible?" The policeman jumps since the professor's question is keyed high-C or thereabouts. Diane drops her purse and she and the policeman, and even Harry, dive under the table after it.

"I bet it's going to be a demonstration!" enthuses Diane in the new intimacy on the gravel. Any warmth is dispelled by a purple hatchet of a man who joins them under the table. "What in hell are you all doing? You got these people's idents?" The young policeman begins straightening up as the chief plucks Diane's license, shakes the gravel off and squintingly reads it, tosses it back into her purse. The rest rise--Harry banging his head on the table--a beat after the young policeman does. "KILL IT! KILL THAT WONDERBURGER!" the loudspeakers command.

Ashes are falling out of a liverish sky, Harry tasting one and convulsing. "All's I need," the chief retreats as he says it, the policeman following. "Who these people?" Chief demands while brushing ashes from his uniform. "They Quakers or something?" He looks to the young, fat officer as if no answer from him would be possible. "Anyways I gotta go grab that idiot Chinaman or Turk or whatever the hell he is, make him stop burning that shit right now! Said he wouldn't do it on weekends too. Council's gonna have to do something about him and I mean yesterday. Can't have tourists coming through this pukey crap." Diane is brushing off the dancing Harry as the professor almostsings "Quickly! Quick-uh-LEE! Cover the plastic hamburger! It's an historical treasure!"

"Who the hell's that foolish hippy with the kid?" The chief has been truly startled.

"Bearded one's at the college."

"Well who's the girl?"

"Boy. High school boy."

"Well I'm not sure of anything in this gluk but I'm damn sure you aint getting around to get those idents. Now hop to it--and get weapons from those stupid hunters and put 'em in trunk of your patrol car. They can come by later and explain to

yours truly why they're hunting around here. Another thing I'm taking up with that lazy council. Everything's changing around here and they're sitting on their fat ass." It's almost black now and the wind is comprised of swirling ashes. The chief holds his nose against the sulphur smell.

"You're just nervous is all. I got it here."--as the policeman waves a loosely-muscled arm to indicate the whole establishment.

"You just be careful. Hippies'll say you hit them when you don't." Then the purplish chief peers up through the gloom. "Upwards of twenty men on this, State Police sending. We knew about it last week. Where were they then, hey?" He blows out a nostril towards the gravel. "That there college trained ministers...that's all they fuckin did years ago!"

"Goodness!" and Diane prods Harry's ribs. "It's just like on TV." Harry thrusts a fist as if looking for someone to fight, but stops abruptly to stare profoundly close into a glowing cut on his hand.

Inside the kitchen cube within the wide, strange, gloaming, the chef throws a switch and arc lights flicker all around them, but can only radiate a few feet with any authority. Everyone is weakly brushed by a sick bluishness.

The policeman is approaching the group of hunters next to the professor and Porkpie along the fence separating the Dutch Wonderburger from the soon-to-be-built Fishface. In a second he seems swallowed by them, mystical red blotches from their clothing agitating in the sickly light. They are evidently arguing and one hunter leaves the group to rest his rifle over against the fence, and squat there to become its guardian. Now the waiter is among them, the silvery antenna snapping madly and making transient, chrome-colored fans as he is pushed and pushed. Soon another hunter abstracts himself to pull sticky steel wool from his fingers, but the professor shoves him back into their roiling midst where he actually gets punched in the face by one of his fellow hunters at the moment the professor appears in their midst yapping "They're going to seize the hamburger! The cops are! It's World War Three and this is the Hamburger Sarajevo, the Hamburger Sarajevo!" The young, sweating policeman shoulders his way through the hunters to get at him, but a slim state trooper has grasped the wild eyed professor round the chest and is backing away from the group, dragging him. This new officer eventually whirls him round; another has a spacey Porkpie by the elbow. More troopers are pouring in on both sides of the hamburger and now the hunters are anxiously surrendering their weapons to them.

"Pretty dilated," the slim trooper says of the professor's

eyes.

"The light's bad, not to say corrupt, and I got the virus."

"That's what it is, hey?"

A lurching car, its tires spitting gravel announces the return of the local chief. "Let's everybody finish up their food," he shouts from the open window. And getting out as the car still slowly moves: "Gotta clear this place and I mean now!" Diane is thinking that all the new policemen look thin and kind, and so she asks one when the demonstration will begin, but he leaves to go over to the fence where she notes that several policemen have the professor and Porkpie leaning, and are patting their behinds.

Though the ashes no longer fall, the sky is still liver-colored, pulsing red from the spinning lights atop the police cars. Diane lifts her binoculars to see even more of these red lights sliding down all three roads and into the valley. Because the binoculars are misaligned, the dim policemen seem flat and doubled, as if four sit in each car's front seat. These twin cars fatten past doubled gas stations and diners to sort of elbow down through the matrix of wires.

The chief flies back to Diane and Harry, knocks the binoculars from her eyes. His back turned, the chief, scarlet, can't see Harry trying to butt him with his head. He whips around puzzled after Harry has missed and fallen. "No time to play with you two this time! Move it! And I do mean now! And you just better watch it," he bellows at Harry, teeth chattering in his small face. Harry, seated on the gravel, bursts into tears.

Every few seconds another police car wheels into the parking lot. Most of the state troopers have on what looks like motorcycle helmets with black visors hiding their faces, but the officer with the bushy moustache who directs traffic wears a World War One style hat. "Don't let them get behind me so I can't get out," instructs Diane. "I wanna go see the demonstration on TV."

"Taking care of that, lady. but you get out of here right now." Studying Harry he adds "We don't know what-all is going to happen."

He has pointed to the brim of his hat in some kind of a salute, and now his hand seems coated with a kind of phosphor dust as it drops so slowly at the general shriek. Everything seems to hop a little, the air washing up against everybody with a *fuffffffff*, pushing all the policemen and diners back. There is immediate silence now but the loudspeakers continue shrieking because the waiter has thrown the walkie talkie against the fence and it lays there buzzing and squawking and

whistling. "Oh my God too late!" whispers the trooper who had grabbed the professor. He says it as if he himself is to blame. Diane is walking towards the fence and is jostled by the boy in the porkpie hat who tears past her emitting a kind of humming sound. He bounces off the hood of a late- arriving police car, sits down and drools. His hat rests up near the windshield when the car stops. Inside the restaurant the chef's face pours down the glass, the lights running red blue and green behind him. Harry folds into the car like the good boy Diane had a moment before described in her request.

Before Diane arrives at the fence she can see that the Fishface is spitting fire, a sooty liquid rolling from its mouth. Then she's close enough to see a few tongues of flame scattered along the vacant lot, a heap of blankets vibrating in fire under the Fishface.

The center of all the fire and shaking is a sitting form of a girl, stiff yet shirveling, that finally settles down inside itself like an ancient doll which has been dropped. In all the fuff-fuff sound once can almost hear a sigh; then a cloudy woosh as a policeman plays an extinguisher, and white powder falls upon the blackened mass.

Diane spins around to check that Harry is safe and he smiles back from the car. Her hair has become hot, and she puts her hand to it and sighs. She turns back to see smoke rising the same color as the black air. The Fishface spits liquid and flame. Most of the cops are clambering over the fence now, chalky handkerchiefs held under their black visors.

"But I didn't know it was going to be like this," a girl's small voice floats in monotone as she is led with others to sit against the fence with the professor. She says it again and again as she sinks down into her army clothes and chokes. A small black youth in an immaculately white t-shirt jumps up. "Ohmy God did you ever?" he croaks. "Wuuuuffffff! and that was it! She went right up!"

The professor seizes his hand and pulls him down. "Cool it, just cool it, Hasan. Eullulla made the sacrifice concomitant to her revolutionary aims and objectives." Now a fat girl in a sari retches and the professor hisses something like not being strong enough to make a revolution. As these revolutionaries draw in tighter from the surrounding policemen, the professor asks to read something when the TV crew arrives.

Diane is backing up when they arrive, so they leave their van on the highway and rush in. "You blew it! I gave you the right time and you blew it!" the professor spits. "Dumb Fucks Everywhere! But," he waves a paper, "I still got something here for you." Suddenly laminations pop apart in the Fishface's

mouth and white grains puff out. The professor's group laughs in the tension but he scowls. "Okay then, one second," he directs the cameraman already sitting on the gravel with his bulky camera. The professor slides an Afro comb through his beard a musing second, and gravely smiles.

Diane hears a little of his statement because her car has stalled and the key refuses to turn for some moments. "Our sister, Eullulla in her pyroconsumation...rare courage...horror hypocrisy..killing Asian-Indian-Blacks...pseudo-moral constructs...revolutionary..."

"All dull and work play," Harry states as they fishtail in departing, benign in the dim light from the dash. Diane, smiling, twists a hand into his crotch.